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SUBJECT: SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY SESSION: NO QUORUM, BUT
PLENTY OF POLITICAL POSTURING

1. (U) An extraordinary session of Parliament held July 30 at the written request of 36 Members of Parliament (MPs) failed to reach the required quorum of 33 MPs/Ministers present. An unusual request while Parliament is not in session and many MPs are abroad on vacation, the extraordinary session was called to discuss amendments to a 2005 social security law. The English daily Arab Times reported July 29 that more than 20 of the 36 MPs requesting the session were currently out of the country and were not planning on returning for the session. One of the MPs contacted by Kuwait Times prior to the session said, "My colleagues urged me not to come back saying the session won't be held due to lack of quorum." The session was initially delayed when only 29 MPs and two Ministers attended. After a thirty-minute delay in an attempt to reach quorum, 31 MPs were found present, but the two Ministers, Public Works Minister Badr Al-Humaidi and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and for National Assembly Affairs Mohammed Sharar, were absent. Acting National Assembly Speaker, Adel Al-Sarawi, finally adjourned the session due to lack of quorum.

2. (SBU) Comment: MPs most likely called the July 30 extraordinary session in an attempt to embarrass the GOK for failure to move on social policies, rather than to address the non-urgent issue of Kuwaiti pension funds. The Government and the MPs will fault each other for the lack of quorum claiming the other failed to turn up. This session highlighted, in an unusually unseasonal meeting of Parliament, the continued political jockeying between the government and the National Assembly. End comment.

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